

Message Text

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12

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SUBJECT: NATIONAL GUARD RETIREMENT, PROMOTION AND TRANSFER LIST
ANNOUNCED

SUMMARY: THE LONG EXPECTED NATIONAL GUARD (GN) RETIREMENT, PROMOTION AND TRANSFER LIST WAS ANNOUNCED PUBLICLY MARCH 9. MAJOR CHANGES INCLUDE A NEW GENERAL STAFF G-5, A NEW INTER-AMERICAN BOARD MEMBER, CHANGES IN EIGHT OF PANAMA'S TEN MILITARY ZONE COMMANDERS, AND CHANGES IN COMMAND FOR FIVE OF THE SIX GN RIFLE COMPANIES AND THE CAVALRY SQUADRON. CHANGES ARE EFFECTIVE AS OF MARCH 12. (THE FULL LIST OF PERSONNEL ACTIONS WILL BE SENT BY AIRGRAM; THIS CABLE COVERS ONLY HIGHLIGHTS OF THE CHANGES.) MEDIA COMMENT TO DATE HAS BEEN MINIMAL, CONFIRMED TO A GLOSS OF THE NATIONAL GUARD'S CONSTITUTIONAL ROLE IN THE GOVERNMENT, AND IN THE REVOLUTIONARY PROCESS, AND LAUDATORY OF GN PERFORMANCE IN BOTH.

1. RETIREMENTS. LTC ANTONIO SUAREZ, GN G-5; LTC CARLOS MARTINEZ HUETES, PANAMANIAN REPRESENTATIVE TO THE INTER-AMERICAN DEFENSE BOARD; MAJ. HERMOGENES DOENS, COMMANDER OF GN MILITARY ZONE IV (COCLE).

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2. PROMOTIONS. FROM MAJOR TO LIEUTENANT COLONEL:

CECILIO FISHER, ROBERTO DIAZ HERRERA (COUSIN TO GEN. TORRIJOS). FROM CAPTAIN TO MAJOR: GUILLERMO FERRUFINO, SANTIAGO PUERTAS, EDUARDO HERRERA (ALSO COUSIN TO TORRIJOS), ARTURO MARQUINEZ, JOSE MOTTA (CHIEF OF PANAMA NAVAL OPERATIONS), EUSTACE "JACK" SMITH.

3. TRANSFERS. LTC CECILIO FISHER FROM COMMANDER OF ZONE II (COLON) TO G-5. MAJ TOMAS ALBERTO DOUGLAS FROM G-1 DIRECTORATE TO IADB REPRESENTATIVE IN WASHINGTON, MAJ LORENZO PURCELL, FROM SECOND IN COMMAND OF FAP (AIR FORCE) TO COMMANDER OF ZONE VI (COCLE). MAJ. EDUARDO HERRERA, FROM CHIEF OF PERSONAL SECURITY OF TORRIJOS TO COMMANDER OF ZONE V (CHIRIQUI). MAJOR MARCOS JUSTINES, FROM ASSISTANT TO GN DEPUTY COMMANDANT TO COMMANDER ZONE III (VERAGUAS). MAJ. JULIO OW YOUNG, FROM COMMANDER OF ZONE V (CHIRIQUI) TO OFFICE OF THE DEPUTY COMMANDANT, AS ASSISTANT. MAJ. RICARDO GARIBALDO, FROM COMMANDER ZONE VIII (BOCAS DEL TORO) TO CHIEF OF SECURITY FOR TORRIJOS.

5. THE ONLY EDITORIAL COMMENT ON THESE GN CHANGES WAS CARRIED IN THE MARCH 9 "EL PANAMA AMERICA" (A PRO-GOVERNMENT AFTERNOON DAILY). THE EDITORIAL, ASIDE FROM THE NORMAL PATRIOTIC AND CONGRATULATORY LANGUAGE, REITERATED THE NATIONAL GUARD'S CONSTITUTIONALLY MANDATED ROLE AS FOURTH ARM OF GOVERNMENT, AND OF THE REVOLUTION, AND GUARANTOR OF NOT ONLY THE NATIONAL SECURITY BUT ALSO OF THE REVOLUTIONARY PROCESS.

5. COMMENT: WHILE THIS LIST OF GN CHANGES IS FAR-REACHING IN TERMS OF QUANTITY, IT IS DIFFICULT TO SEE THAT IT EVIDENCES ANY HIGHLY SIGNIFICANT CHANGES IN POLICY. MOST OF THESE CHANGES HAD BEEN RUMORED FOR SOME MONTHS; THE SIGNIFICANT THING ABOUT THIS LIST IS ITS OMISSION OF OTHER CHANGES WHICH HAD BEEN ALSO BRUITED. WITH THE EXCEPTION OF LTC SUAREZ, THE GENERAL STAFF REMAINS UNCHANGED, AS DO THE MOST IMPORTANT STAFF POSTS. TWO CHANGES, HOWEVER, ARE OF INTEREST. THE TRANSFER OF MAJ. EDUARDO HERRERA TO CHIRIQUI PROVINCE PUTS A COUSIN OF TORRIJOS IN THE PROVINCE MOST INVOLVED IN LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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THE RECENT MANIFESTATIONS AGAINST GEN. TORRIJOS, AND IN THE PROVINCE THAT TRADITIONALLY HAS BEEN REGARDED AS MOST INDEPENDENT-MINDED. THE PROMOTION OF ROBERTO DIAZ HERRERA TO LIEUTENANT COLONEL SIGNIFIES ANOTHER STEP IN THE PROCESS OF GROOMING HIM FOR FUTURE HIGHER COMMAND IN THE GN FOR WHICH HIS AMBITION, AND HIS TALENT--TO SAY NOTHING OF HIS BLOOD TIE TO TORRIJOS--FIT HIM.

JORDEN

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